



"THE
HARVEST
INDEED
IS
GREAT,
BUT
THE
LABORERS
ARE
FEW.

"PRAY
YE
THEREFORE

The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa

PUBLISHED BY

THE WHITE SISTERS OF AFRICA

METUCHEN,

✕

✕

NEW JERSEY

THE
LORD
OF
THE
HARVEST,
THAT
HE
SEND
LABORERS
INTO
HIS
HARVEST."

St. Luke x-2

Recommendation of His Excellency the Bishop Of Trenton, N. J.

Dear Reverend Mother:

I am indeed pleased to recommend most heartily the Apostolic work of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. You are laboring in your own quiet way, and in accordance with the wishes of our Holy Father, Pius XI, gloriously reigning, solely that Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, may be better known and better loved by those for whom he gave His life on the Cross that all men might have life, and have it more abundantly.

Any assistance given you will be rewarded by the Saviour Himself, who has promised: "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." I am sure such a labor of love needs no further commendation to the good priests and faithful people of the Diocese of Trenton.

Wishing you every blessing in your noble work, I beg to remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

✠ MOSES E. KILEY,
Bishop of Trenton.

July 24, 1934.

CONTENTS

AFTER TWO THOUSAND YEARS!	Page 95
By Sr. George Marie, W. S.	
A WORKROOM IN ALGERIA	Page 96
By Sr. Mary Roger, W. S.	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Page 97
CHRISTMAS AT OUAGADOUGOU, SOUDAN	Page 99
By Sr. Mary Paul, W. S.	

STAMPS . . . AND BEADS!

Cancelled stamps of all kinds.
Tear them from your envelope with a little margin of the paper.
As soon as you have a few pounds, mail them to:

WHITE SISTERS' CONVENT,
319 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, N. J.

SEVERAL GOOD WAYS TO HELP THE MISSIONARY SISTERS

PRAYER:—Without the grace of God the Missionaries could do nothing whatever for the salvation of souls. By praying for them you bring down God's blessing upon them and their apostolic labors.

SUFFERINGS:—To unite one's sufferings, trials and hardships to those of Jesus on the Cross and offer them for the salvation of pagan and Mohammedan souls.

ALMS:—If no one would support the Missionaries they could again do nothing.

THE ANNUAL SUPPORT OF A SISTER	\$125.00
THE ANNUAL SUPPORT OF A DISPENSARY	40.00
TO RANSOM A YOUNG GIRL FOR A CATHOLIC MARRIAGE	20.00
TO SUPPORT A LEPER IN A HUT FOR A MONTH	2.00
TO PROVIDE BREAD FOR A CHILD MONTHLY	1.00
TO CLOTHE A CHILD FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION	1.00
TO KEEP A SANCTUARY LAMP BURNING FOR A MONTH	1.00
BY BECOMING A PROMOTER OR MEMBER	

OF A MISSION GUILD OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA.

YOUR LAST WILL:—It is a poor Will which does not name Our Lord Jesus Christ among its beneficiaries. Remember the works of charity of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa in making your Will. And when life, that precious time to merit has passed away for you, the Sisters, whom you have helped, will continue to do good in your name and you will share in their prayers, works and sacrifices.

OLD JEWELRY:—Why treasure away broken and old-fashioned gold or silver jewelry when it can be transformed into chalices or ciboriums to shelter the Eucharistic King? Would not the memory of loved ones be more honored by sacrificing their cherished souvenirs for so sacred a cause than by letting them lay useless in some corner?

Missionary Guilds of Our Lady of Africa

A Mission Guild of Our Lady of Africa is established to help the Missions under the special protection of Our Lady, Queen of Africa. Just as every other guild or club, there must be a President and other officers. There must also be promoters, who try to get as many members as possible.

The members of the Guild promise to contribute a certain small amount for Our Lady's Missions every week. As a reminder of their promise and at the same time to facilitate the putting aside of this small sum, the members, at their enrollment in the Guild, receive a little bag in which they may keep their weekly offering. At the close of every ten weeks, the promoters collect the total for the missions.

A meeting is called for the promoters to give in the offerings of their members, which is then sent to the Sisters. This meeting may also be a little social gathering for the Promoters.

Who would miss five or ten cents a week? However, this sum, although small in itself, when donated by a number of people each week, becomes no less than a fortune in Missionland.

Who can estimate the number of hearts, living tabernacles, in which God will reign, simply because a nickle or dime was put aside each week for the missions? And who can conceive

the reward that Our Lady of Africa will obtain from her Divine Son for those who help to extend His Kingdom among the Mohammedans and pagans.

SPECIAL FAVORS ARE GRANTED TO PROMOTERS BY THE HOLY SEE.

(a) A plenary Indulgence may be gained under the usual conditions on

(A) the day of their enrollment as promoters.

(B) the following Feasts: Immaculate Conception, Saint Augustine, Saint Monica, Saint Peter, and Saint Francis Xavier.

The Masses said for Promoters after their death at any Altar will procure for their souls the same favors as if the Masses were said on Privileged Altars.

FOR ORDINARY MEMBERS

Three Masses are said every month for the living and deceased members. Moreover, they share in the apostolic labors of all the Sisters of the Congregation and in the prayers said for them in all the convents of the Congregation.

The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa



Published and edited with ecclesiastical approbation bi-monthly by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters), Metuchen, N. J.

Subscription One Dollar a Year

Entered as second class matter December 15, 1931, at the post office at Metuchen, N. J., under the Act of March 3, 1879.



After Two Thousand Years !

THE GOSPEL is always actual. The eternal word does not grow old; the oracle of Christ resounds in all countries: "Go teach all Nations!"

"Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass." St. Matthew XXIV-35.

One must admit, however, that the Gospel scenes are afar off. If Jesus came back to the earth He would not recognize the scenery of His Palestine. And one can easily understand the anachronism of a little girl: "A Pharmacist and a Republican went up to the temple to pray."

Islamism has kept stable the people it has touched. It seems to have petrified them in the degree of civilization they possessed. The fervent Mohammedan lives outside the scope of actual evolution. In the oriental framework of North Africa, the Mohammedan keeps with his customs, his attitudes, and his gestures an aspect of another age; and in this frame, many Gospel and even patriarchal scenes are reproduced.

How many times these souvenirs come to enlighten and supernaturalize the simple sights of every day life!

Does not this haughty "Sidi," majestically draped in the folds of his long burnoose, recall the proud Pharisees who, in the days of yore, slyly spied the Master?

In the mountain paths of Kabylia under the shade of the dark foliage of the olive trees — contemporaneous perhaps with those of Gethsemani — I crossed Samaritan women coming from the well with their jugs of water on their heads or shoulders. Alas! these did not meet with Jesus there.

Have I not met, more than once, a good shepherd carrying on his shoulders the lost sheep, or with crook in hand lead his fold of one hundred sheep across the plain?

Better still, does not this woman with head veiled holding her babe bound in swaddling clothes recall the Virgin Mother with fine profile and olive complexion such as portrayed by St. Jerome?

I would like to have the power of animating these Gospel scenes; and by comparing with them the every day life of our Arabs, make better known this people, so far from the Redeemer by faith; yet so near by their customs, their manners and their language (of the same root as the Syro-Chaldean spoken in the time of Our Lord).

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee . . . to Bethlehem . . . with Mary his espoused wife . . ."
St. Luke, II-4-5.

The gospel says no more leaving full liberty to our personal interpretations, based on the customs

Continued on page 98



A Good Shepherd

A Workroom

"GOOD MORNING Doudja, how are you?"
"Quite well, Sister."

But the answer came in a voice betraying the utmost sadness. Poor, gentle, Doudja! She has



How she envies her companion who, a former worker, receives a few orders.

every reason to be sad.

We had climbed a ladder to the garret that was her home. There we found her sitting on the floor — the ceiling was too low to allow one to stand upright. At three o'clock in the afternoon it was almost dark. We could just distinguish the forms of two small children lying on a piece of sacking.

"Are the children ill, Doudja? They should be at school at this hour!"

Again there were tears in Doudja's voice. "We had nothing to eat, Sister, and rather than send them hungry, I told them to sleep. But what shall I do when they awake? Yesterday the landlord told me that I must go out unless I could pay some of the rent. I am six months in arrears!"

"How much do you pay for this room?"

"One dollar a month. Since my husband's death, I have had no work."

Six months in arrears! To say nothing of debts contracted to keep body and soul together — and everything sold to buy bread — first jewels and trinkets, then clothes — then furniture. Poor Doudja!

"Listen, my poor child, you must get work of some kind! Suppose you tried to work for a shop? Or you might do housework for some lady, just a few hours every day?"

"I have thought of it, Sister, but my neighbors talk to me of what they do. . . Fathma told me that she had tried leather-work, but she had to go so often to get the work and take it back that the car fare cost more than she made. If I went out for housework, what would the children do without me?"

We knew that there was more in her mind. Doudja was well born; her family was formerly highly respected. Now that she has met with depression she

is sensitive of criticism, and she knows that the neighbors would gossip about her if they saw her always going out.

"When you lived at Birkadem you made Arab lace for us. Would you like to do some now?"

"Oh! Sister, if you can give me any work I shall be so grateful! I will do it well for you; I will work so quickly! May God reward you! He will give blessings to your family! That is work I could do at home! Oh! give me work, Sister, please!"

"Come and see us to-morrow. Our lace is not selling very well, but we cannot leave you in this state. Pray to LALLA MERIEM (the Blessed Virgin) that the sales may become better, which will enable us to help you and many others. Cheer up! Doudja; good-bye until tomorrow!"

GIVE ME WORK! That cry rang in our ears as we walked on to the next house on our list. There we found Safia, one of our best embroiderers, sitting at her embroidery frame. It was a pleasure to see that the room reflected the smile on Safia's face. What a change from the squalor in which we had found her! A little help, a few tactful lessons on cleanliness and hygiene, and what a transformation took place!

"Oh! Forgive me, Sisters, I did not hear you!"

"Too much absorbed in your work? That is very good. There speaks a new Safia, not the lazy one we knew five years ago!"

Safia smiled. "I like my work now."

(In other words, she likes the fruits of her work and rightly.)

Formerly things were very different. Safia's husband was in business, and could keep his wife and children. The grandmother lived with them and helped Safia with the housework, which was certainly reduced to the minimum. Disorder reigned supreme. Once we happened to call and found Safia idling her time away, nursing resentment against her neighbors with whom she was always quarrelling.

She seemed intelligent and frank. We invited her to come to the workroom for lessons in embroidery.

"I have no need to work," she replied proudly.

"Not now, perhaps; but one day you may be very glad to possess the means of earning money."

Safia allowed herself to be persuaded. She came one day to the workroom and showed us what she could do, for an aunt had already introduced her to the embroidery frame. She was neat-fingered and skillful, and soon became a regular pupil at the workroom, where she was joined later on by her two little girls. By learning to keep their work clean and neat, they began to think also of their personal appearance and of their home. . . We taught them to



They do not notice the Sister's they examine one another

m in Algeria

sew and mend and were rewarded by seeing the transformation of which I spoke above.

One day Safia confided to me: "My husband comes home earlier now. He says the children and the house are nicer!"

"What about your neighbors?"

Oh! They are nicer, too! I have no time to quarrel with them!"

These were great advantages; but greater still was the blessing of regular work when death robbed the little home first of the grandmother and then of the husband and bread-winner. Then Safia and her two daughters depended entirely on their own nimble fingers. The elder girl helped her mother in the house in the mornings, and in the afternoon took her place beside her at the embroidery frame.

"What should I do now," said Safia, "If I had not learned to work?"

On the way back to the convent we were stopped by Mbarka. Under the HADJAR (veil) we recognised her dark tragic eyes. During the last few months Mbarka has suffered one misfortune after another. Her husband fell out of work, and ran away from home rather than see his children starve. Then they became ill, and Mbarka herself was worn to a shadow. All through her troubles we never heard her complain; it seemed that she drew nearer to God.

Now she has a fresh problem: what to do with her two girls, old enough now to begin some work. Even a little would help to pay her rent. She knows how to do MATERAH (an old-fashioned kind of Algerian embroidery), but for this there is no longer sale.

"Listen, Mbarka. When you are free this afternoon, come and learn to do Morocco point lace. Bring the little girls and we shall teach them, too."

So Mbarka will come and take her place beside our young apprentices. Soon she will acquire the new art, and if it does not bring in a large amount of money, at least it will keep the little family from starvation.

Here we are back to the workroom. What is Sister saying to that woman at the door? It is the Sister whose duty it is to pay the women for their work, and to engage hands. The woman's tragic expression is painful to see.

"La MESKINA?" repeats the Sister. "There is no more work to do, I can not give you any."

"You came to help us," moans the woman, "And now you send me away!"

"Ah! If she only knew that the lack of work distresses us just as much!"

"What is the use of my giving you any," continued Sister. "I have no money to pay you."

"That is the fourth this morning," she said turning towards us sadly. "I told them to come back in a

month's time, and to pray in the meantime that we have buyers for the work."

Jesus and Mary, have pity on Mbarka and Safia



"There's no more work to do."

and Doudja, and all who long in vain for work . . . all the others . . .

SISTER MARY ROGER, W. S.

Now that Christmas is drawing near, we wish to notify the readers of "The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa" that they may obtain useful, agreeable, and out of the ordinary, Christmas gifts for their friends in visiting the variety of Arabian lace, Oriental embroidery and basket work from our native workrooms in Northern Africa, which we have at Metuchen. At the same time, they would be participating in the evangelization of the Mohammedans, the sole purpose for which the Sisters conduct workrooms for the Mohammedan women and girls.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the Lepers:

Mrs. Barre, Springfield, Mass.
Miss I. Yale, Glendale, Calif.
Mrs. Dolan, Carteret, N. J.

To clothe a child for First Holy Communion:

Mrs. Barre, Springfield, Mass.

To provide bread for a child:

Mrs. Barre, Springfield, Mass.

Towards the building of a nursery, anon., Scranton, Pa.

For a food shower:

The Catholic Daughters of New Brunswick, N. J.



Sister's arrival, for in waiting, one another's work.

After Two Thousand Years! (Continued)



A Mother with Babe in swaddling clothes.

of the country. The little ass, that tradition gives for mounting to the August Travellers, must have surely been with them; for they are rare, even among the poor, who possess none. It finds its lodging under the family roof and eats the dry grass along the road. How often, have I thought of Joseph and Mary in crossing a modest couple on the sunny road or under the shade of the palm or olive trees! Nevertheless, to be truthful the more often it is the man who rides the animal while the woman follows on foot. But it does happen that the scene is more similar to that of the Gospel story. The young woman, concealed in her long veil, is sitting on the ass; while her husband, with long burncose leads the beast.

"There was no room for them in the inn." St. Luke II-7.

"There was no room in the inn"; therefore, Joseph took Mary under shelter in a stable near by. A December Oriental evening being rather chilly, a few sticks, gathered here and there by St. Joseph,

were put into the hearth — a hole in the earthen floor — where traces of ashes indicated the passage of visitors the day before. The supper, no doubt, consisted of unleaven bread brought from Nazareth and some dried dates.

"And she brought forth her first born son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes." St. Luke II-7.

Not having any bed, chair, nor table, did you ever ask yourself how the young Mother managed to wrap her new-born babe in the swaddling clothes? Would it be wanting in respect towards the Virgin Mother to imagine her sitting on the floor swaddling her Divine Son on her lap? That is how, simply and graciously, the young mamas of the Sahara do. The little hands, the rosy feet disappear underneath the swaddling-band; then the infant is firmly attached with a string made of camel's hair.

The "Bambino" that is venerated in Italy does not differ in this from the infant Arab.

"You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." St. Luke II-12.

The ox and ass are not mentioned in the Gospel, but tradition holds so well to them that I cannot refrain from recalling the resemblance of a living crib which I saw constituted in Kabylia.

The Kabylia "Gourbi" of earth or stone has but the ground floor. In certain homes, however, the part reserved for the people is elevated from that destined for the stable. Thus the heads of the animals arrive on a level with the family lodging. One day I actually saw an ox and an ass advance their big heads one on each side of a young mother who watched her baby in swaddling clothes lying at her feet.

Was it not the scene of a living crib?

May your prayers advance the hour wherein the Arabs will embrace and keep the doctrines of the Redeemer of mankind as much as they have kept to the manners and customs of His country.

SR. GEORGE MARIE, W. S.

A READY ANSWER

The Sister was showing the little ones a picture of the Crib. Danieli, three and a half years old, was all attention.

"Look! Danieli," said the Sister, "these angels are more recollected than you are in church."

"Yes," answered the little one, all except one, He's laughing, and making music; he will wake the baby Jesus."

OBITUARY

Mr. Walter Reed, Jersey City, N. J.
Mr. Ouimette, Springfield, Mass.
Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Alden, Montpelier, Vermont.

Christmas at Ouagadougou, Soudan



Admiring the
Infant Jesus.

WITH EACH succeeding year, Christmas becomes more impressive in Mossiland. Already on Christmas eve, hundreds of catechumens, having arrived at the end of their probation, await the regenerating water to enter the service of the little King of Love.

It is a magnificent sight to see them in their long tunics forming groups which make white circles, from the Communion Rail to the door of the church.

While the touching and significant ceremonies are performed, they remain motionless, their arms crossed, their eyes lowered, speaking only to say: they renounce satan, they believe in Jesus Christ.

The preparatory rites having come to a close, the Missionary Father asks: "Wilt thou be baptized?"

"I will."

The first ebony head bows to allow the water to flow over it; then, in like manner, one after the other the heads incline. What an afflux of Divine Life!

When the hundreds of catechumens have become as many neophytes, the Bishop enters the sanctuary to make of them soldiers of Christ. In these souls whitened and strengthened by the Holy Ghost, Jesus, the Bread of Life, will come; for at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass celebrated for them, the newly-made Christians receive their First Holy Communion.

It is all perfectly simple; yet how grandiose! At eleven P. M. our whole Catholic population prepares for the mystery of the night. But for such a feast, the church is much too small. An Altar is erected at the entrance and it is there, in the open air, in the presence of a silent and recollected multitude, that the Christ Babe will descend on earth.

A throng of pagans surround the Christians and with awe and respect keep watch. If, of the thousands of Sacred Hosts distributed at the mid-night Mass, none are for them;

nevertheless, has not Jesus begun the work of conversion in many of their souls?

The Seminarians of Pabre sing the offices of the feast in pure Gregorian. Nothing troubles the transports of their clear voices.

Pray that more glory will be rendered to the King of peace by those upon whom He seems to have opened His reservoir of grace.

SR. MARY PAUL, W. S.

A WITHERING ROSE

In visiting the natives at domicile, strange requests are often made. For instance, an old woman who appeared to be a centenarian and whose name was "Awodia," which means rose, no doubt perceived the Rose was withering for she mysteriously approached the Sister and said: "It is so long that I am old. I beg of you, give me a remedy to grow young again."



A scene similar to that of the Gospel story.



If the Infant Jesus appeared to you and asked you for food, would you not sacrifice anything and everything to satisfy his desire?

This is not a supposition. The Infant Jesus does come to you in the person of thousands, even millions of his abandoned little ones to ask you not only for corporal nourishment but also for spiritual bread.

Yes, He who feeds the birds and other creatures of His creation leaves it to you to feed His little ones in Pagan Lands. And why? So that in doing it for them you may do something for Him.

Fill the Christmas stocking you receive and give the Infant Jesus the joy of saying to you some day:

"Come the blessed of my father — As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to Me."

— St. Matthew XXII

